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SECRET

13 June 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Malaise in Ethiopia



1. In our estimate after the abortive coup in Ethiopia of last December (NIE 76. 1-61, published 24 January 1961), we concluded that pressures for major reforms would grow, especially among the more progressive civil servants, but that, if the Emperor could re-establish an effective government apparatus, we did not believe any important coup attempt by disgruntled military and civilian elements would develop in the next year or so. We also noted, however, that the Emperor faced a dilemma -- whether to make concessions to the reformers and hope to control them that way or to rely upon traditionalists and thus further alienate the reformers.

2. The Emperor has not moved to resolve his dilemma. He has neither introduced reforms nor moved to re-establish effective control. He procrastinated for months in formulating a new

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cabinet and then finally appointed an ill-matched assortment of
essentially conservative ministers.

3. In the circumstances, another coup attempt is possible. Army leadership is weak and divided; some of its officers might attempt a coup and some might attempt to counter it. In any case, the Emperor's authority is not being asserted, and his departure from power -- by assassination or otherwise -- would probably plunge Ethiopia into a period of sustained and bloody civil strife. The Crown Prince, the heir apparent, showed his ineffectualness in the December coup attempt.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

BERNARD KENT
Chairman

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